SYED SHAHNAWAZ HUSSAIN): (a) to (d) As per Annual Survey of Industries 1997-98 the total number of Food Processing Units in the factory sector in the Country were 31415, out of which 2888 units are located in the Eastern including the North East. In addition to this 323 Food Processing and Training Centres have been set up in the Country under the Plan Assistance of this Department so far, out of this 143 Centres have been set up in the Eastern States. Owing to the Food Processing being high risk and low margin, there is general reluctance amongst entrepreneurs to set up industries in this sector. The number of units in the Food Processing Sector set up in the Eastern States (Including Orissa) is proportionately less. In order to boost the setting up of these industries, the Department operates a number of Plan Schemes to provide assistance and act as catalyst to facilitate setting up of such units by State/Cooperative/Private Agencies all over the Country including the Eastern States.

Modification in Agriculture Insurance Scheme

1528. SHRI RAMACHANDRAIAH RUMANDLA: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is any proposal for changes in the Agriculture Insurance Scheme;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) when would it be made effective?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI S.B.P.B.K. SATYANARAYANA RAO): (a) to (c) No Sir. However, the new Scheme i.e. National Agriculture Insurance Scheme (NAIS) provides for a review after one year of its implementation and therefore, changes if any, on the basis of experience can be considered for incorporation in the scheme from the next year.

Scheme for Amelioration of Acid Soils

1529. SHRI JANARDHANA POOJARY: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government of Karnataka has requested for release of financial assistance under the Centrally-sponsored scheme for amelioration of acid soils and reclamation of saline including coastal saline

and sandy areas; and

(b) if so, the details and the reaction and the steps taken by Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI S.B.P.B.K. SATYANARAYANA RAO): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. Intervention of Central Government was sought to reclaim 25,000 ha. of acidic soils at a cost of Rs. 5 crores and 24,000 ha. of saline including coastal saline and sandy areas at a cost of Rs. 60 crores during 9th Five Year Plan. The Ministry's proposal for inclusion of a scheme for amelioration of acid soils in the country was not approved by the Planning Commission and hence no financial assistance could be provided to Karnataka State under the Scheme. As regards the Scheme of Reclamation of Saline including Coastal Saline and Sandy Areas, a Joint Team comprising representatives of Department of Agriculture and Cooperation, Indian Council of Agricultural Research and Ministry of Water Resources has been constituted by the Ministry of Agriculture to identify the extent of problem areas of saline including coastal saline and sandy areas in the country and to recommend package of practices for reclamation of saline areas.

Based on the recommendations of the Joint Team, the proposed scheme of Reclamation of Saline including Coastal Saline and Sandy Areas will be submitted to the Planning Commission for consideration.

Swadeshi Vigyan Mela

1530. SHRI NANA DESHMUKH: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether a ""Swadeshi Vigyan Mela" organized by Vigyan Bharati was held in IIT, Delhi with the assistance of various scientific and Government agencies;

(b) whether such melas or chaupals for the benefit of the farmers would be organized on constant basis to acquaint farmers with utilization of modern inputs and technologies in agriculture with the help of Agriculture Universities, Government agencies and NOGs;

(c) if so, by when; and

(d) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE